

**GOOGLE LLC'S  
REPLY ISO MOTION  
FOR RELIEF  
REGARDING  
PRESERVATION**

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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**

**NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, OAKLAND DIVISION**

CHASOM BROWN, WILLIAM BYATT,  
JEREMY DAVIS, CHRISTOPHER  
CASTILLO, and MONIQUE TRUJILLO,  
individually and on behalf of themselves and  
all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

GOOGLE LLC,

Defendant.

Case No. 4:20-cv-03664-YGR-SVK

**GOOGLE LLC'S REPLY IN SUPPORT  
OF MOTION FOR RELIEF REGARDING  
PRESERVATION**

The Hon. Hon. Susan van Keulen, USMJ

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1 **I. INTRODUCTION**

2 Judge Gonzalez-Rogers' December 12 Order denying Plaintiffs' Rule 23(b)(3) class  
3 certification motion has significantly altered the basis on which the Court ordered the onerous  
4 preservation plan. But one did not need this recent validation of Google's class arguments to  
5 conclude that the undue burden of preserving [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Analytics mapping/linking  
6 tables (the "Tables")—totaling [REDACTED] of data over the course of a single year, *see* Mot. 1—  
7 clearly outweighs any purported benefit. Indeed, Plaintiffs fail to address, much less plausibly rebut,  
8 the substantial financial cost, human capital and storage resources required to preserve the Tables,  
9 on top of the immense resources Google is already expending to comply with other aspects of the  
10 Court's Preservation Orders. Equally as dispositive, Plaintiffs have not and cannot show that the  
11 Tables are necessary to interpret the data Google is preserving—the very reason this Court ordered  
12 preservation of the Tables in the first instance. *See* Dkt. 545-2 at 1, 6. Given Plaintiffs' failings in  
13 this regard, and Google's compelling proportionality arguments, the relief Google seeks should be  
14 granted.

15 In lieu of a substantive response on the burden and lack of prejudice, Plaintiffs request that  
16 the Tables be submitted to them and the Special Master for review to determine whether they should  
17 be preserved. They seek to justify this unwarranted and burdensome request with the platitude that  
18 "they don't know what they don't know." But this excuse no longer makes sense: after 28 months  
19 of discovery, including an eleven-month Special Master process, dozens of depositions, and  
20 hundreds of thousands of produced documents, Plaintiffs should be held to the task of explaining,  
21 not merely hypothesizing, why it makes sense to place this immense burden on Google *despite*  
22 evidence that the Tables are simply unnecessary. In light of this mountain of evidence that Plaintiffs  
23 fail to address, the Court should grant Google's Motion. If the Court decides to require preservation  
24 of the Tables at Plaintiffs' request, Plaintiffs should bear the cost of preservation.

1 **II. ARGUMENT**

2 **A. Plaintiffs Fail to Address the Undue Burden Preserving the Tables Imposes on**  
 3 **Google.**

4 Google established that preservation of the Tables would require storage of [REDACTED]  
 5 [REDACTED] of data and cost approximately [REDACTED] over the course of three years. Mot. 7. These  
 6 costs are separate from and in addition to the costs of Google's other, already burdensome,  
 7 preservation obligations under the Court's orders. *Id.* Plaintiffs do not even attempt to rebut the  
 8 substantial burden Google has identified. Their opposition to Google's requested relief is therefore  
 9 insufficient. *See Lickerish, Inc. v. PicClick, Inc.*, 2022 WL 2812174, at \*4 (N.D. Cal. July 18, 2022)  
 10 (holding that undue burden was established and noting that "[a]gainst this concrete and significant  
 11 burden, the plaintiffs offer almost no substantive response. The relevant portions of both their  
 12 motion and reply cite standards and repeat that the burden will not be high, but they give no real  
 13 reason for thinking so."); *U.S. ex rel. Carter v. Bridgepoint Educ., Inc.*, 305 F.R.D. 225, 243 (S.D.  
 14 Cal. 2015) (holding \$2 million for production of ESI in format requested by plaintiffs to be unduly  
 15 burdensome where plaintiffs failed to "cogently counter [d]efendants' substantial cost estimates" as  
 16 laid out in "a declaration from an actual expert detailing these possible financial burdens").

17 Plaintiffs' only argument is that Google has not established undue burden because it has not  
 18 demonstrated any "technological feasibility concerns." Opp. 10. Technological feasibility is not  
 19 the standard. Plaintiffs acknowledge that when assessing burden, courts take into account the  
 20 "realistic costs involved" in discovery. Opp. 10 (quoting The Sedona Conference, eDiscovery for  
 21 Corporate Counsel § 2:4) (emphasis added). This Court, too, has held that a preservation plan  
 22 should "strike an appropriate and necessary balance between the need to preserve relevant data in  
 23 an immense universe of data, without imposing undue burden and with careful consideration for the  
 24 practical challenges to both Parties to manage vast data sets." *Calhoun*, Dkt. 766 at 6; *see also U.S.*  
 25 *ex rel. Carter*, 305 F.R.D. at 243 ("realistic cost of preserving, retrieving, reviewing, and producing  
 26 ESI" should be considered in burden analysis and holding that defendants established undue burden  
 27 by showing substantial costs and effort needed for production of ESI requested by plaintiffs); *Larsen*  
 28 *v. Coldwell Banker Real Est. Corp.*, 2012 WL 359466, at \*7 (C.D. Cal. Feb. 2, 2012) (Both

1 “technological feasibility and realistic costs” should be considered when assessing burden of  
 2 preservation). Here, as Google has shown, even if preserving the Tables is technologically feasible,  
 3 the burden of doing so is unwarranted.

4 Plaintiffs’ reliance on *Columbia Pictures Indus. v. Bunnell*, 2007 WL 2080419, at \*7-11  
 5 (C.D. Cal. May 29, 2007) (cited at Opp. 10), is misplaced. There, the Court found that preservation  
 6 would “result in a volume of data far less than 40 gigabytes” a day, an amount which the defendant  
 7 had conceded would not raise concerns about “computer processing unit usage.” *Id.* at \*8. The [REDACTED]  
 8 [REDACTED] Google would have to store each year to preserve the Tables are [REDACTED] times more than  
 9 that. Likewise, in *Columbia Pictures*, defendants needed to employ only “a setting change on the  
 10 web server program” to retain data that had “key relevance and unique nature” and was not otherwise  
 11 available. *Id.* at \*7, 11. Here, Google provided sworn statements concerning its limited storage  
 12 capacity, the difficulty of preserving the Tables given that capacity, the amount of human capital  
 13 Google must expend to design, configure, and continually monitor, maintain, and debug  
 14 preservation pipelines, and the substantial cost such preservation would require. *See generally* Dkts.  
 15 781-4-781-10. Finally, in contrast to *Columbia Pictures*, and as Google established *infra* Section  
 16 B, the Tables are not “unique” or of “key relevance”—the links contained in them are found in other  
 17 tables or sampled data Google is already preserving. Mot. 6-7. In short, Plaintiffs’ Opposition does  
 18 nothing to counter the undue burden established in Google’s Motion and accompanying  
 19 declarations.

20 **B. Plaintiffs Have Failed to Show the Benefit of Preserving the Tables Is**  
 21 **Anything but Negligible.**

22 The Court ordered preservation of mapping and linking tables not because they are “data  
 23 sources” with additional relevant data,<sup>1</sup> but rather in response to Plaintiffs’ argument that they would  
 24 need these tables to “read the data that Google is ultimately ordered to preserve.” Dkt. 545-2  
 25 (Plaintiffs’ Objections to the Special Master’s Report and Recommendation) at 1, 6 (claiming “[t]he

26 <sup>1</sup> Plaintiffs claim that “Google does not dispute that the [REDACTED] data sources it seeks to stop preserving  
 27 via the present Motion are relevant.” Opp. 1. That is wrong. As Google stated in the Motion, these  
 28 tables are not needed to work with the preserved data and are “irrelevant to Plaintiffs’ claims and  
 alleged damages[.]” Mot. at 1.

1 only way for a user to connect the identifier on their browser to Google’s matching identifier is with  
 2 these mapping tables.”); *see also* Dkt. 781-11 (8/4/22 Hr’g Tr.) at 106:16-18 (“if you would need a  
 3 mapping table to work with any of the data that is being exchanged in this case, that table has to be  
 4 preserved.”). As Google explained in its Motion, the Tables are not necessary to the only task for  
 5 which they were ordered to be preserved: to enable Plaintiffs to read the preserved data if it were  
 6 produced. Plaintiffs have identified no facts to rebut this evidence.

7 **██████████ Tables:** Plaintiffs acknowledge, as they must, that ██████████ Tables  
 8 only contain Biscotti ID linkages drawn from other tables. Opp. 4 (acknowledging that  
 9 ██████████ “provides a single graph of Biscotti IDs,” and “accesses mapping/linking tables to  
 10 associate certain identifiers”). Plaintiffs do not need these ██████████ Tables to read any of the  
 11 preserved data because: (1) these Tables do not contain any identifier mappings or linkings that are  
 12 not derived from other mapping or linking tables; and (2) the underlying tables, including those that  
 13 contain mappings or linkings between an “identifier on [a user’s] browser” and “Google’s matching  
 14 identifier” are being separately preserved. Dkt. 781-9 ¶ 5.

15 Unable to articulate any specific reason why the Tables are necessary, Plaintiffs hide behind  
 16 “we don’t know what we don’t know” arguments, and claim there are “mysteries” surrounding these  
 17 Tables. Opp. 4. Not so. Google has produced more than 5,000 documents discussing in detail all  
 18 aspects of ██████████: what ██████████ is, how the ██████████ pipelines work, from what  
 19 sources the ██████████ tables draw data, the purpose, design details, and use case of ██████████,  
 20 etc. In fact, Plaintiffs relied on many of these documents in various briefing and depositions. *See*,  
 21 *e.g.*, Dkt. 309-6 at 14 (██████████ is “[a] single graph of Biscotti Ids.”); Trebicka Dec. Ex. 1 at 1  
 22 (“██████████ aggregates Biscotti ID links from various sources including: ██████████ (linking via  
 23 anonymous Google O2O properties), ██████████ (linking via app click traffic), GSA webview (linking  
 24 via Google Search App.”); *id.* Ex. 2 at 2-4 (explaining how the ██████████ pipelines work); *id.*  
 25 Ex. 3 (Liao Depo Ex. 20) at 1 (“██████████ ... provides a graph of [Biscotti IDs] where graph  
 26 vertices are [Biscotti IDs] and edges (links) are relationships between [Biscotti IDs]”). That  
 27 ██████████ is larger than other mapping and linking tables is not an argument for its preservation.  
 28 The daily snapshots with Biscotti ID linkages these Tables comprise are derived from other tables



1 that are already being preserved, which explains why they are larger and not necessary here. Dkt.  
2 781-9 ¶ 5.

3 **Analytics Tables:** The mappings the Analytics Tables contain are limited to  
4 UID/CID to Biscotti or UID/CID to device ID. Dkt. 781-10 ¶ 5. Any mapping between UID/CID  
5 and Biscotti will be self-contained within the Analytics data already being preserved, and device  
6 IDs are only present for App events and are not received through the data flow at issue here. *Id.*  
7 ¶¶ 5-6. Therefore, Plaintiffs would not need the Analytics Tables to read any preserved data.  
8 Plaintiffs attempt to undermine this conclusion by claiming that the Analytics log field names  
9 produced in discovery do not contain UID, CID, or Biscotti values. That is false. UID and CID  
10 values are populated in the “Request” field and Biscotti values are populated in the “OtherCookies”  
11 field, as is readily apparent from the Named Plaintiff data Google produced from these logs. *See*  
12 Dkts. 799-3; 799-4; *see also* Trebicka Decl. Ex. 4 (data produced from [REDACTED]  
13 [REDACTED]); *id.* Ex. 5 (data produced from [REDACTED]  
14 [REDACTED]). The fact that Plaintiffs purportedly do not know “what  
15 other data sources are used to propagate the Analytics tables, or what other data sources draw  
16 from the tables,” is no basis for preserving them either. Plaintiffs sought (and obtained) preservation  
17 of all mapping and linking tables on the sole basis that they purportedly needed the Tables to “read  
18 the data that Google is ultimately ordered to preserve.” Dkt. 546-2 at 1. The Analytics Tables  
19 simply do not serve this purpose, and therefore need not be preserved. *KAIFI LLC v. Apple Inc.*,  
20 2021 WL 3727079, at \*1 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 23, 2021) (“Rule 26 provides that the court must limit  
21 discovery that is ‘unreasonably cumulative or duplicative, or can be obtained from some other  
22 source that is more convenient, less burdensome, or less expensive.’”) (quoting Fed. R. Civ. P.  
23 26(b)(2)(C)(i)).

24 **C. Balancing the Unrebutted Burden Against the Minimal Benefit of the Tables**  
25 **Militates in Favor of Granting Google’s Motion.**

26 The heart of this dispute is determining whether the substantial and unrebutted burden  
27 associated with preserving the Tables outweighs the negligible benefit of their preservation. *See*,  
28 e.g., *Elgindy v. Aga Serv. Co.*, 2021 WL 5083761, at \*2 (N.D. Cal. Nov. 2, 2021) (“[C]ourts are

1 required to limit discovery if its burden or expense outweighs its likely benefit; this is the essence  
 2 of proportionality, a frequently ignored or overlooked discovery principle.”) (internal quotation  
 3 marks omitted); *Apple Inc. v. Samsung Elecs. Co.*, 2013 WL 4426512, at \*3 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 14,  
 4 2013) (The “essence of proportionality” is determining if “the burden or expense of the proposed  
 5 discovery outweighs its likely benefit.”). Google has clearly demonstrated that the burden  
 6 outweighs the benefit here. Requiring Google to spend ████████ of dollars and substantial time and  
 7 effort to preserve ████████ of data that is not needed for Plaintiffs to read, interpret, or  
 8 otherwise work with other data Google is preserving is not proportional to the needs of the case.

9 The remaining proportionality factors, when considered against the backdrop of the undue  
 10 burden and minimal benefit of preserving the Tables, also weigh in favor of granting Google’s  
 11 motion:

12 ***Importance of the issues at stake in the action.*** Even assuming that Google’s receipt of  
 13 pieces of data not tied to a user’s identity raises an issue of great importance, preservation of the  
 14 Tables does not facilitate its resolution—and Plaintiffs have not shown otherwise. *See supra* Section  
 15 B. Therefore, the Tables have no importance to any of the issues at stake in the action.

16 ***The amount in controversy.*** Judge Gonzalez-Rogers’ December 12, 2022 Order denying  
 17 Plaintiffs’ motion for a Rule 23(b)(3) class mooted the damages figures Plaintiffs cite in their  
 18 Opposition. *See* Opp. 8. Even if there still were significant damages in dispute, discovery must be  
 19 proportional to the needs of the case. *See Lopez v. United States*, 2017 WL 1062581, at \*4 (S.D.  
 20 Cal. Mar. 21, 2017) (finding requested discovery was not proportional and stating that “the amount  
 21 in controversy, while substantial, is just one factor to be considered and weighed against the other  
 22 factors.”) (citing Fed. R. Civ. P. 26(b)(1) Advisory Committee Note to 2015 Amendment). Here,  
 23 too, Plaintiffs’ pie-in-the-sky damages claims do not justify placing an undue burden on Google.

24 ***The parties’ relative access to relevant information.*** Google has had to bear the brunt of  
 25 discovery throughout this case, having now produced nearly six million pages, defended 33  
 26 depositions for the Brown case alone, responded to hundreds of responses to discovery requests,  
 27 and participated in an eleven-month-long Special Master process into log and data issues. As a  
 28 result of this expansive discovery, which cured the purported asymmetry of access to relevant

1 information, Plaintiffs can now confirm for themselves that the Tables are not necessary for the  
 2 purpose for which they were originally ordered to be preserved—i.e., “to work with any of the data  
 3 exchanged in this case.” *See* Dkt. 782-8 (8/4/22 Hr’g Tr.) at 104:5-15.

4 ***The parties’ resources.*** Google has expended and continues to expend tremendous  
 5 resources to comply with discovery efforts, including for other preservation obligations. *See* Mot.  
 6 4-6. The Court’s order to preserve the Tables was based on the understanding that they are already  
 7 stored “in the ordinary course” and this would “not be a big ask.” Dkt. 782-8 (8/4/22 Hr’g. Tr.) at  
 8 104:5-9. As Google’s Motion has demonstrated, that understanding is incorrect. The additional and  
 9 substantial resources, time, and effort needed to preserve the Tables outweighs their minimal  
 10 relevance. *See* Mot. 9-10.<sup>2</sup>

11 ***The importance of the discovery in resolving the issues.*** Finally, as detailed in the Motion  
 12 (at 7-8) and further supported in Section B above, the Tables have little, if any, importance to this  
 13 litigation because they are not needed to work with or interpret the preserved data and are not  
 14 necessary in resolving the key issues in this case. (That conclusion is only heightened now that  
 15 Judge Gonzalez-Rogers has limited Plaintiffs only to forward-looking injunctive relief, Dkt. 803 at  
 16 2, to which an exceptionally large trove of historical data is irrelevant. *See id.* at 33-34 (detailing  
 17 injunctive relief Plaintiffs seek).)

18 As the totality of these factors demonstrates, Google is entitled to the relief it seeks.  
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21 <sup>2</sup> Plaintiffs unsuccessfully attempt to distinguish the cases cited in the Motion, which stand for the  
 22 proposition that it is improper to assume that certain discovery would not be a heavy burden because  
 23 a defendant is a large company. *Opp.* 9. In *Lickerish, Inc. v. PicClick, Inc.*, 2022 WL 2812174, at  
 24 \*4 (N.D. Cal. July 18, 2022), the court rejected the conclusory argument that discovery sought  
 25 would not be a “heavy burden” because Ebay is a “multibillion dollar Internet-based business [that]  
 26 can determine when there are communications with its own servers.” Contrary to Plaintiffs’  
 27 assertions, this conclusion had nothing to do with the fact that Ebay was not a party to the litigation.  
 28 Plaintiffs similarly miss the point of *Nyberg v. Zurich Am. Ins. Co.*, 2016 WL 11671468, at \*4 (D.  
 Kan. June 21, 2016), where the court held that even though it was clear the defendant had greater  
 access to relevant information and more resources, that does not justify unlimited discovery  
 requests. *Id.*; *see also Lopez v. United States*, 2017 WL 1062581, at \*4 (S.D. Cal. Mar. 21, 2017)  
 (“[C]onsideration of the parties’ resources does not ... justify unlimited discovery requests  
 addressed to a wealthy party.”).

**D. Plaintiffs Should Bear the Costs of Preservation.**

Should the Court require preservation of the Tables despite the substantial, un rebutted burden and minimal benefit associated with such preservation, Plaintiffs should be required to assume the costs. *See U.S. ex rel. Carter*, 305 F.R.D. 225, 240 (S.D. Cal. 2015) (“[T]he cost of even accessible ESI’s production may be shifted to a party that has not shown its peculiar relevance to the claims and defenses at hand” if the proportionality factors make it appropriate) (citations omitted). None of the arguments Plaintiffs make to avoid bearing the cost of the preservation they now seek are persuasive.

First, Plaintiffs claim, with no support, that Google “fought tooth and nail to prevent the Court, the Special Master, and Plaintiffs” from discovering details about the data contained in the Tables.<sup>3</sup> Opp. 11. That is incorrect. Neither the Court nor the Special Master directed Google to provide specific details about the Tables, and Plaintiffs cite nothing to the contrary. In fact, Google has produced Named Plaintiff data that contains mappings of UID/CID to Biscotti IDs and has produced over 5,000 documents discussing [REDACTED]. *See Trebicka Decl. Exs. 1-5*. In light of that discovery and the declarations Google submitted in support of the Motion, which discuss the Tables in detail, Plaintiffs’ claim that the Tables are “still shrouded in secret [sic]” is baseless. Such an unsupported claim does not justify why Google rather than Plaintiffs should bear the unreasonable costs of preservation.

Second, Plaintiffs’ contention that they should be exempt from assuming the costs of preservation because they have already “shared the substantial costs” of discovery to date is similarly meritless. Plaintiffs *did not* “share” Google’s immense (and continued) costs in preserving or producing data in this case, or in any other way ease Google’s burden in the discovery process.

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<sup>3</sup> Plaintiffs also complain that Google never produced the Tables in discovery, Opp. 1, but do not (and cannot) point to a principle of Rule 26 that would necessitate this production, nor a single order by the Court or Special Master directing Google to do so. Producing the entirety of the Tables would be overly burdensome due to the sheer volume of such a production and would not aid in resolving relevant and material issues. Plaintiffs need not review the Tables to understand that they are not the only means of interpreting the data Google is preserving, which was the sole purpose for which the Court ordered their preservation. *See supra* Section B.

1 The cases Google cited in its Motion confirm that where, as here, certain discovery is unduly  
 2 burdensome, a party should not be required to bear the full costs of that discovery. Plaintiffs try to  
 3 distinguish these cases by arguing that they involve either situations where the defendant bore all  
 4 the cost of discovery with no help from plaintiffs or opposing parties that possess similar financial  
 5 resources, *Opp.* 11-12, but these arguments are misplaced. In fact, the cases all stand for the  
 6 proposition that courts can and should allocate burdensome discovery costs in a manner that is fair  
 7 and appropriate under the circumstances. *See U.S. ex rel. Carter*, 305 F.R.D. at 335 (“[W]here the  
 8 cost of producing documents is very significant, the Court has the power to allocate the cost of  
 9 discovery, and doing so is fair.”); *id.* at 228 (“Projected to cross \$2 million,” the costs of the  
 10 requested discovery “cannot be deemed as insubstantial, with at least partial shifting having been  
 11 repeatedly ordered when similar sums have been alleged”); *Boeynaems v. LA Fitness Int’l, LLC*, 285  
 12 F.R.D. 331, 341 (E.D. Pa. 2012) (“[W]here (1) class certification is pending, and (2) the plaintiffs  
 13 have asked for very extensive discovery, compliance with which will be very expensive,[] absent  
 14 compelling equitable circumstances to the contrary, the plaintiffs should pay for the discovery they  
 15 seek.”); *Rowe Ent., Inc. v. William Morris Agency, Inc.*, 205 F.R.D. 421, 428 (S.D.N.Y. 2002) (“[A]  
 16 court may protect the responding party from undue burden or expense by shifting some or all of the  
 17 costs of production to the requesting party.”) (citations omitted). Here, Google should not be forced  
 18 to bear the entire burden of [REDACTED] of dollars in preservation costs where preservation of the Tables  
 19 at issue adds little to no value. If Plaintiffs insist that the Tables are necessary despite evidence to  
 20 the contrary, they should bear the cost of the preservation.

21 **E. Submitting the Tables to Special Master Brush and Plaintiffs is Not**  
 22 **Warranted.**

23 The issue presented in the Motion is discrete and can be effectively and timely addressed by  
 24 the Court. The Special Master did not consider mapping or linking tables to be relevant and did not  
 25 recommend preservation of such tables. *See* Dkt. 524. The Court adopted this requirement in  
 26 response to Plaintiffs’ objection to the Special Master’s recommended preservation plan claiming  
 27 that they would need the tables to work with the preserved data. *See* Dkt. 545-2 at 1, 6; Dkt. 587 at  
 28 8. The evidence firmly establishes that the [REDACTED] Tables at issue simply do not facilitate this purpose,

1 and no additional process is necessary to validate that conclusion. Reopening the Special Master  
 2 process to address an issue that was not even considered by him during discovery will not add any  
 3 efficiency but will instead only increase the already immense burden on Google and prolong the  
 4 burden it seeks to avoid.<sup>4</sup>

### 5 **III. CONCLUSION**

6 For the foregoing reasons, the Court should grant Google's Motion.

8 DATED: December 15, 2022

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25 <sup>4</sup> Plaintiffs further seek a ruling from this Court that Google should benefit from any decision  
 26 limiting preservation. Opp. 12-13. Plaintiffs' request is vague and duplicative, at best. As they  
 27 acknowledge in the Opposition, the Court has already held in its May 20, 2022 order that Google  
 28 "may not use the fact that only sampled data, not complete data, is available to challenge class  
 certification generally or attestations by individuals that they are members of the class." Dkt. 587.  
 It is therefore unclear what additional ruling Plaintiffs now seek.

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